

"Online Shopping Mall Virtual Association"

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0071] A system and method for providing a social experience coupled to a virtual shopping mall which creates an apparent geographical coupling between cyberstores within the virtual mall and shoppers within the mall. An online mall shopper may configure a list of other shopping "buddies". The online shopping mall system then notifies or otherwise alerts the shopper of the presence of other concurrently online shoppers from the buddy list, allows for the shoppers to communicate and move to each other's present position within the shopping mall. When both shoppers are at the same virtual position within the shopping mall, they are presented with the same product information or virtual mall images and sounds, such that they may communicate with each other about a product or store in the mall. Shoppers may find other "buddy" shoppers by proximity, common interest terms, and may introduce shoppers to each other to build group conversations.